

# PERSPECTIVES

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## Upcoming Meetings:

April 21:  
Design Review Committee, 4:00 p.m.

April 24:  
City Planning Commission, 1:00 p.m.  
Public Hearing, 2:30

May 5:  
Joint Meeting of the City Planning  
Commission & Design Review  
Committee, 3:00 p.m.

May 8:  
City Planning Commission, 12:00 p.m.

May 14:  
Wetlands Board Public Hearing, 2:00  
p.m.

May 15:  
Board of Zoning Appeals, 10:00 a.m.

May 21:  
Board of Building Code Appeals,  
10:00 a.m.

## PLUM POINT PROJECT

The Virginia Port Authority (VPA), in partnership with the City of Norfolk, will be constructing an environmental and community enhancement project at Plum Point, which is located near the medical center and just north of the area referred to as Atlantic City. The environmental conditions at Plum Point will be improved through wetlands enhancement, shoreline stabilization, and the removal of old piles and other debris in the Elizabeth River. An enhanced open space area for walking, jogging, and biking will also be provided for passive enjoyment of the river.



Conceptual Site Plan

The project will be funded entirely by the Port Authority. VPA will be impacting about 5 acres of the Elizabeth River due to necessary improvements at Norfolk International Terminals. They are required to provide compensation for this unavoidable impact to the river either through payment into a trust fund or by funding a project within the watershed for wetland restoration. In many cases, trust fund payments are never seen by the impacted community, which is why the Port Authority has proposed this project for Plum Point. The City of Norfolk owns the property and will maintain the improvements once they are completed.

The Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Quality have approved the Port Authority's plan for mitigation. The shoreline around Plum Point will be graded to a required slope and stabilized with riprap placed from the shore. An acre of wetlands will be created on the north side of the property to provide environmental benefit to the river and to create habitats for native birds and other river inhabitants. This area will be sprigged with marsh cord grass, which is currently growing in the area. Another environmental benefit is the removal of approximately 500 old piles and other debris currently located in the river south of the property near Norfolk Boat Works.

Plum Point will be landscaped using a variety of native plants, trees and perennials with seasonal color. The site provides for an extension of the Elizabeth River Trail with two looped paths. An open lawn area is proposed between the trail paths for passive enjoyment of the space. Benches and an informational kiosk are also planned for the end of Plum Point overlooking the river.

The Urban Land Institute identified Plum Point as an opportunity for passive open space in their assessment of Atlantic City in March of 2002. However, the site will not only provide an amenity for new development in Atlantic City but also for the medical center and the neighborhood of West Ghent. People working at the medical center and other office buildings nearby use the Elizabeth River Trail during the week for exercise, and this project would increase the length of the trail. The West Ghent neighborhood has always promoted the use of Plum Point for passive open space to support their neighborhood.

City staff from the Departments of Public Works and Planning and Community Development and also the Bureau of Parks & Forestry worked with the Virginia Port Authority and their consultant to develop the conceptual plan for this project. The property is currently designated for mixed use under the General Plan and zoned for institutional uses. Changes in the land use and zoning designation for the property are currently being processed through the City Planning Commission and the City Council to recognize the current use of the site for passive open space. City Council is expected to act upon the General Plan amendment and rezoning in April.







WE'RE ON THE WEB

[www.norfolk.gov/planning/](http://www.norfolk.gov/planning/)

Highlights of our web page include:

- ◆ Meeting schedules & agendas for boards & commissions
- ◆ Staff reports & maps for Planning Commission public hearing items
- ◆ General department information and contacts
- ◆ Links to the Zoning Ordinance
- ◆ Demographic & Land Use information
- ◆ Answers to frequently asked questions (such as how to rezone a property)

We are constantly updating our web page - please come back often.

## Plum Point Cont'd

The project team is currently working on the details of the plan, which will be reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee, the Norfolk Design Review Committee, and City Planning Commission beginning in late April. Construction is expected to begin in August with the project substantially completed in November, 2003.

*Jennifer White - Senior Planner*

## SITE PLAN REVIEW : The Nuts and Bolts

Each Wednesday a group of city staff, representing 13 City departments, divisions, and bureaus, meet to discuss and review proposed site plans under the regulations set forth in Chapter 26: Site Plan Review of the City of Norfolk Zoning Ordinance, 1992. This multi-agency review is coordinated through the Department of Planning and Community Development (P&CD). The weekly meeting affords an opportunity for private or City projects to be preliminarily presented for initial feedback on code requirements. The Site Plan group is charged with insuring that the regulations of Site Plan are met prior to the issuance of site plan approval. A Site Plan application is required for any new construction (except for single-family dwellings), new parking lots and additions, or parking lot expansions of 2500 square feet or more.

The staff members from Public Works, Utilities, and P&CD review plans for the technical code requirements which are the nuts and bolts of a project. The Bureau of Parks and Forestry regulates the landscaping requirements. The Departments of Health, Police and Fire review covers aspects of public safety. The site plan regulations are intended to insure the project development is consistent with the general public welfare, with the policies in the General Plan of Norfolk, and with the technical requirements established for the various areas of review.

As set forth under Chapter 26, the purpose of the regulations is to provide for a review of:

- Compatibility with its environment, land uses, and existing buildings;
- Quantity, quality, utility, size and type of the project's required open space, impact upon existing natural environment and proposed landscaping improvements;
- Ability of the project's traffic circulation system to provide for the convenient and safe internal and external movement of vehicles and pedestrians;
- Quantity, quality, utility and type of the project's required community facilities; and
- Location and adequacy of the project's provision for drainage and utilities.

Last year the site plan group reviewed 78 new applications in addition to revisions to previously approved site plans. In the first quarter of 2003, the number of submittals has exceeded last year's. The group currently has under various stages of review 38 projects ranging from two-family residential structures to three major multi-use projects including University Village, the Hope VI Broad Creek Renaissance and East Beach development.

The Site Plan group works diligently to move projects through this review and to facilitate development and redevelopment for the City of Norfolk. A member of the Department of Development is key to the group's success in assisting commercial projects.

*Nancy Weil - Site Plan Coordinator and Planner*

## Regional Transportation Plan Update:

Extensive work is currently underway at the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) to complete on schedule the next update to the region's Long Range Transportation Plan as mandated under federal law. Over the next several months, significant efforts related to both the large, regional referendum-type transportation improvement projects as well as the smaller projects in each individual city to be included in the plan update will need to be advanced. In order to meet federal requirements, the update to the regional transportation plan for Hampton Roads must be completed, including all required air quality reviews, by February 2004. On March 19, 2003, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) received the first in a series of briefings related to the proposed regionally significant projects being considered during the current update process including the six improvement projects that were part last November's failed referendum. Currently, a gap of some \$27 billion dollars is estimated between identified transportation needs and currently forecast improvement revenues in the Hampton Roads region. Therefore, if many of these projects are ultimately to remain included in the next plan update, a major new proposed plan of funding will need to be developed and agreed upon. The March update reviewed the revenue generation potential resulting from combinations of gas tax increases, tolls and sales tax levies. No decisions on a specific proposed plan of finance are needed at this time, and additional briefings will be provided as the update moves forward.

*Jeff - Transportation Manager*